



Georgia Farm Service Agency Newsletter

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Keeping Rural Kids Safe and Healthy

Living and working on a farm can be wonderful, especially for kids. However, farms can be dangerous places. Each year, thousands of adults and children who visit, work, or live on the farm are injured or even die.

Children are most vulnerable to many of these hazards because they are curious by nature and there are so many tools, chemicals, and machines that can easily catch their attention. Numerous agricultural safety studies show that hundreds of children are injured on farms each year. An estimated 20,000 youth suffer serious long-term injuries and each year, 104 children die in farm-related tragedies.

To a large extent, people think farm incidents are inevitable, but they are preventable. Consequently, children, and adults, need to know how to be safe on the farm. The Farm Service Agency partners with other organizations to teach farm families how to protect their most precious commodities – their kids.










The Wilkes County Farm Safety Day Camp in Washington, Georgia was started in an effort to prepare kids for a summer on the farm. For the past four years, Wilkes County Farm Service Agency has partnered with the local Extension Service, Georgia Farm Bureau, AgGeorgia Farm Credit, Rayle EMC, and other local organizations to offer farm safety training. Classes taught each year include Fire Safety, Farm Equipment Safety, ATV Safety, Electrical Safety, and Farm Dangers. This year they also had a roll-over truck mounted on a trailer to demonstrate with dummies the injuries that can occur if seat belts are not buckled. County Executive Director Kyle Brown taught a class in Tractor Safety and retired County Executive Director Charlie Wurst was a guest speaker. Charlie lost both arms in a farm accident and his story made a dramatic impression on the children.

Georgia Farm Service Agency encourages you to teach children from a young age to stay alert and stay safe on the farm. Children are the future of farming. To learn more about the partnership of FSA and Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK) check out the website, <http://www.fs4jk.org/>



Kids at the Wilkes County Farm Safety Day Camp learn about snakes. Photo courtesy Mary Kiley, AgGeorgia Farm Credit.

Prevention is key!

-  Frequently inspect your farm for hazards and make repairs and/or improvements to protect workers and children who live on or visit the farm
-  Provide a safe, protected area for children to play on the farm
-  Assign age- and ability- appropriate tasks
-  To prevent clothing and hair from catching in machinery, wear snug-fitting clothing and tie back long hair
-  Have a “no-riders” policy for all farm equipment
-  Always check for bystanders, especially small children, before starting or moving farm equipment
-  Always disengage equipment, lock brakes, and shut off equipment before dismounting
-  Farm animals are unpredictable. Teach children to treat livestock with respect and avoid startling them
-  Learn First Aid and teach family members and friends to be aware of the many safety hazards on the farm.

Compiled by Stephanie Brown, Georgia Farm Service Agency, with excerpts from Farm Safety 4 Just Kids publication Keeping Rural Kids Safe & Healthy through Cooperative Efforts.

Director's Message

Rains spell relief, and in some areas, too much relief. As one of our district directors often says we are always ten days from a drought or ten days from a flood. Rains across the state in the last few weeks have vastly improved crop conditions for cotton, corn, soybeans, peanuts and pastures. However, numerous early season crops were lost in some cases and recent excessive rains in some areas lead to crop losses, especially in tobacco. We still have a long way to go before this crop year is done, but overall, production is looking much better.

Not knowing when severe weather conditions will hit your area means that good farm records and keeping your local Farm Service Agency informed about changes on your farm is very important. Under the Non-insurable Crop Assistance Program or NAP for short, farmers are required to report apparent losses within 15 calendar days to remain eligible for possible payments. We hit on this topic a lot in this newsletter, because NAP is one of the more challenging programs for farmers to use and for FSA personnel to administer. Staying in contact with your local FSA office about changing crop conditions on your farm will help prevent some common problems that may make you ineligible for payment.

Since our last newsletter Georgia welcomed Deputy Secretary James Mosley, FSA Administrator James Little, Special Assistant Tom Dorr, and Assistant to the Civil Rights Assistant Secretary, Paul Gutierrez to the state. We are most appreciative to the President of Fort Valley State University, Dr. Kofi Lomotey for hosting this meeting at the Pettigrew Center. All of the faculty and staff at Fort Valley State University did an excellent job planning and hosting this important listening session for small and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Leaders in the farming community, including Melvin Bishop, of the African American Family Farms organization along with Ralph Paige and Shirley Sherrod, of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives were on hand to present issues of concerns directly to Deputy Secretary Mosley. Their input was critical to the success of the meeting and helped the Deputy better understand problems facing small and socially disadvantaged farmers in our state. Fort Valley State University videotaped the session and copies of the videotape will be available within a few weeks. If you would like to purchase a copy please contact Dr. Fred Harrison with Fort Valley State at (478)825-6269.

We appreciate all the comments coming from members of the farming community about this newsletter. One thing we would like to ask, if you need to change your address, or no longer wish to receive a copy of this newsletter, please contact your local FSA service center first. Requests sent to the State office will continue to be processed and forwarded to your local service center as well.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation with filing timely reports. It helps us help you.

Sincerely,



The Georgia Farm Service Agency State Newsletter is published by the Georgia FSA State Office. Contact your local USDA Service Center - Farm Service Agency listed in the phone book, weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. to obtain a free subscription, make address corrections, or be removed from the mailing list.

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the main source for information contained in this educational newsletter. Eligibility and participation for all FSA programs is determined in accordance with FSA rules and regulations. Contact your local FSA Service Center to determine program eligibility. The editor is not responsible for unintentional errors or copy omission that may occur, other than to correct it in the following issue.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Soldier's and Sailor's Relief Act

Producers who are full-time members of the military or have been called to active duty with their Reserve or National Guard units should know about financial protections provided by the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940. The act helps offset the effects of reduced pay that often accompany extended deployments for military personnel, especially members of the National Guard and Reserves.

The act prohibits financial institutions, including the Farm Service Agency, from foreclosing on mortgages incurred prior to entering active duty if the producer's ability to pay is materially affected by military service. In these cases, FSA will not accelerate or foreclose on direct loans we've made for farm operating or ownership purposes. Loans guaranteed by FSA and made by private lending institutions are similarly affected by the act. The moratorium on servicing actions includes the time the producer is on active duty and for three months following that.

In addition to delaying foreclosures, the act can temporarily cap loan interest rates, including credit card rates, at 6 percent. To take advantage of the rate cap producers must contact their lenders and request the reduction. The producers must provide the lenders a copy of their military orders and show that their ability to pay has been materially affected by military service.

Loans made by FSA's Commodity Credit Corporation, including marketing assistance, Farm Storage Facility and Sugar Storage Facility loans, are also covered by the act.

Producers or borrowers should notify the county office staff if they are full-time members of the armed services or have been called to active duty status, whether or not their financial situation has been adversely affected.

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***Need to update your mailing address?
Want to learn more about specific
programs listed in this newsletter?***

***Call your local FSA County Office.
You can locate your local office in the
phone book or on the internet at
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ga/>***

Important Dates for FSA Programs

Tobacco:

1-Aug Burley: Designation to auction warehouse, receiving station, or dealer.

Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP):

1-Aug Final date to request reconstitution of DCP farm.
30-Sep Final date to sign DCP contract (\$100 late fee).

NAP Insurance Sales Closing Dates:

1-Jul Cabbage (south) per FCIC.
15-Aug - Fall planted crops to be harvested within next year.
- All grass crops with intended use of forage (FG).
- All value loss crops.
- All cool season grass with an intended use of grazing (GZ).
31-Aug Onions per FCIC.
30-Sep Barley, canola, oats, wheat per FCIC.
20-Nov Apples, blueberries, peaches, pecans per FCIC.
1-Dec Honey.

Emergency Loans:

9-Oct Emergency loans deadline for designation S1852
13-Oct Emergency loan deadline for designation M1509

Conservation & Compliance:

15-Jul Crop Acreage Reporting deadline
30-Jul Grassland Reserve Program application deadline
30-Sep Final availability date for Trade Assistance Production for Shrimp and Catfish

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Conservation & Compliance Programs

Clark Weaver, Section Chief

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Signup

Georgia county offices continue to offer landowners with eligible environmentally sensitive land an opportunity to enroll in the CRP Continuous Signup.

Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices such as riparian buffers, filter strips, grass waterways, etc. may be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and the land meet certain eligibility requirements. Continuous CRP contracts are 10-15 years in duration and are not subject to competitive bidding.

An eligible producer must have owned or operated the land for at least a 12-month period prior to submitting the offer.

The land that is being offered must be cropland that has been cropped 4 of the 6 years from 1996 to 2001 or be considered marginal pastureland which is suitable for use as a riparian buffer.

FSA offers various financial incentives and bonuses for land accepted into this program. See your local office for details.



Iowa, 1940. Photo courtesy Farm Security Administration Historical Photography Collection.

Late-Filed Acreage Reports

Producers are reminded that filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses can prevent loss of benefits for certain programs.

July 15 is the final acreage reporting deadline. However, if the crop has not been planted by the final reporting date, then to be timely filed, the acreage must be reported within 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

Producers who failed to meet the acreage reporting deadline may be able to file an acceptable late-filed acreage report. Your local FSA County Office Committee may accept a late-filed acreage report as timely filed when all the following apply:

- The operator pays the costs of a farm visit and the costs of verification and determination of crop acreage
- Physical existence of the late-filed CRP or crop residue for the crop year being reported exists
- The crop's use can be verified
- The crop's acreage for the specific crop year can be determined.

Customer Statement

In January, 2004, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that eGovernment initiatives would be a special focus of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2004. The USDA Customer Statement is part of this effort and brings to the farmer and rancher un-precedented online access to their business activities with USDA 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Customer Statement allows USDA customers to view:

- ✓ their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs,
- ✓ information on farm loans, and
- ✓ conservation plan and land unit information.

To view your Customer Statement you will need to obtain a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 Account. This process is easy and starts online by creating a user ID and password and confirming your email. The final step requires visiting a local USDA Service Center to complete the eAuthentication process.

For an overview of the Customer Statement and to register, go to: <http://customerstatement.sc.egov.usda.gov/Demo/>

Farm Loan Programs

David Laster, Section Chief

Loan Servicing

The Farm Service Agency's mission is not limited to providing just credit – it is to provide supervised credit. This means that FSA works with each borrower to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in farm production and management, then works with the borrower on alternatives and other options to address the weaknesses and achieve success. Effective supervised credit is the difference between success and failure for many farm families.

To help keep borrowers on the farm, FSA may be able to provide certain loan servicing benefits to borrowers whose accounts are distressed or delinquent due to circumstances beyond their control. These benefits include the following:

- reamortization, restructuring, and/or deferral
- rescheduling at the Limited Resource rate of interest
- acceptance of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive land in exchange for reduction of debt
- writing down the debt to its current market value (delinquent borrowers only)

If none of these options results in a feasible farming operation, borrowers may be offered the opportunity to purchase their debt at its current market value. If this is not possible, FSA can consider debt settlement based on the producer's inability to repay. In some cases, where a successful operation cannot be developed, FSA works with the borrower to help him or her retain the homestead and up to 10 acres of land.

The eventual goal of FSA's farm credit programs is to graduate its borrowers to commercial credit. Once a farmer is able to obtain credit from the commercial lending sector, the Agency's mission of providing temporary, supervised credit is complete.

Loan Type	Jul-04	Aug-04
Direct Farm Operating (OL)	4.25%	*
Direct Farm Ownership (FO)	6.00%	*
Shared Appreciation Amortization	5.00%	*
Fixed Rate loans		
Emergency Loans	3.75%	
Limited Resource Direct OL	5.00%	
Limited Resource Direct FO	5.00%	
Direct FO, down payment, beginning farmer	4.00%	
Direct FO, joint financing	5.00%	
* Rates not available at time of printing. Please check the following website for current interest rates, www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/rates.htm		

TAA Requests Begin in August

Producers seeking assistance under the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers program for fiscal year 2005 may submit their requests to the Foreign Agricultural Service starting Aug. 16, 2004, and running through Jan. 31, 2005. Under TAA, USDA provides technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible farmers and fishermen whose crops or catch have been adversely affected by imports of like or directly competitive commodities.

After a petition has been certified for a group, eligible farmers and fishermen will have 90 days to contact the Farm Service Agency to apply for assistance. Petitioners should file petition form FAS 930 in accordance with 7 CFR 1580.201. A Federal Register notice announcing the petition period for fiscal year 2005 was published on June 24, 2004. This notice may be accessed on the Web at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/info/fr/notices/html>.

FAS must receive the petition by 5 p.m. EST, Jan. 31, 2005. Petitioners can send their petition by fax to (202) 720-0876, or by email to trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov. Mail petitions to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Trade Adjustment Assistance Office, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1021, Washington, DC 20250-1021. Use of fax or email is preferred. The TAA petition form is located on the Web at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/resource.htm>.

For further information or questions about completing form FAS-930, contact the TAA coordinator at (202) 720- 2916. General information about the TAA program can be found on the program's Web site: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/taaindex.htm>.

Production Adjustment Programs

Ronald Carey, Section Chief

NAP Reminder

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP, provides financial help to producers of noninsurable crops when a low yield, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs because of natural disasters. NAP also provides coverage for crops when the catastrophic level of multi-peril insurance is not offered.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop. In addition, the producer's annual gross revenue cannot exceed \$2 million. A payment limitation of \$100,000 per crop year is in effect.

In addition to lacking multi-peril insurance coverage, eligible crops must be commercially produced crops that are:

- grown for food;
- planted and grown for livestock consumption;
- grown for fiber;
- grown under a controlled environment;
- specialty crops;
- value added crops;
- sea oats or sea grass; or
- seed crops.

The program requires that producers must give the county office staff certain information before a disaster happens. They must:

- certify that they comply with all highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements;
- report crop losses within 15 days of the date the disaster occurs or the date crop damage become apparent;
- request payments in a timely manner; and
- report the acreage and shares for all crops potentially eligible for NAP, certify crop production history and report current crop year production on or before the deadline.

Producers must apply for NAP coverage using Form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage," and pay the service fee at the county office. The application and service fee must be filed by the application closing date. The service fee is \$100 per crop per county or \$300 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$900 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

To report losses in a timely manner, producers must complete Part B, "Notice of Loss," on Form CCC-576, for each crop within 15 days of the:

- natural disaster;
- final planting date (for prevented planting);
- date damage or loss becomes apparent; or
- the normal harvest date.

An adjuster must be scheduled to document each loss condition. In addition to documentation of the disaster condition, appraisals or post-harvest inspections may be needed to document losses.

Producers of hand harvested crops must notify the county office staff within 15 days after harvest is completed and before destruction of the crop, so that an appraisal of the remaining production can be completed. The purpose of this appraisal is to document production.

Proposed Rule Change for Tobacco Loan Program

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) proposes to rescind the price support eligibility provision that requires flue-cured tobacco farmers to designate the auction warehouse(s) where they will sell their tobacco and burley tobacco farmers to designate all locations where they will sell their tobacco, both auction warehouse(s) and the central buying points, known as receiving stations, for non-auction sales. Currently price support loans for producers of those kinds of tobacco are available for eligible tobacco only at designated auction warehouses. Entire text of the proposed rule may be found by searching for "Tobacco" at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html> Go to Vol. 69, Number 119, pages 34615-16.

Dates: Submit comments about this proposed rule on or before July 22, 2004, to be assured consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

IE-mail: Send comments to tob_comments@wdc.usda.gov.

Fax: Submit comments by fax transmission to (202) 720-9832.

Mail: Send comments to Director, Tobacco Division (TD), Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), STOP 0514, Room 5750-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250- 0514.

Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Regional News

Fort Valley State University's Agricultural Showcase and Field Day- August 5, 2004

The Agricultural Showcase and Field Day will be held at Fort Valley State University's New Technology Development and Transfer Center. The Center is located at the intersection of Hwy. 341 South and Camp John Hope Road. Signs will be posted to help direct visitors to the event.

This one-day event showcases agricultural and environmental advances conducted at Fort Valley State University, one of Georgia's land-grant universities. Touring field sites you will be able to view demonstrations of organic gardening; trellis systems for small fruits; wildlife food plots; wildlife and forest management studies; field preparation for establishment of a silvopasture; Bermuda grass forage comparisons; livestock grazing studies and much more.

You will view exhibits of advanced research in plant and animal sciences, current activities in family and consumer sciences, extension and agricultural education at FVSU along with exhibits from federal agencies, state agencies, and commodity groups. Lunch will also be provided. There is a \$10 registration fee, however all farmer's registration fees will be covered by a Risk Management Agency Project. Registration begins at 8:30 AM and the program runs from 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM. Call (478) 825-6269 for more information.

Upcoming events

Federation of Southern Cooperatives 37th Annual Meeting, Epes, Alabama
August 19-21, 2004

Southeastern Regional Meeting, Association of National Conservation Districts, Savannah
August 22-24, 2004

Southeastern Association of RC&D Councils 2004 Regional Conference, Savannah
September 22-25, 2004

Georgia National Fair, Perry
October 8-17, 2004

Sunbelt Agricultural Expo, Moultrie
October 19-21, 2004

2004 Biennial Celebrating Rural Georgia Conference

The 2004 Celebrating Rural Georgia Conference is scheduled August 16-18 in Dalton, Georgia. Through well-known speakers and 47 different workshops, participants will learn first hand how rural communities are working to enhance the rural way of life. Ten innovative agriculture workshops will offer agritourism, how to develop/finance niche markets, how to add value to rural Georgia's number one asset – food/fibre production, and much more. Other sessions address housing alternatives; economic, downtown and community development, rural health, education and human services.

For additional information, including registration, visit website www.celebratingruralgeorgia.org or call Candice Gunn at 706-583-2736.



2002 Ag Census Released

You might not remember it, but a while back you were asked to fill out the 2002 Agricultural Census for USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, or NASS. The report is now available, and if your family is among the 50 percent of farm families who, according to the census, have Internet access, you can view the report online.

Among the census highlights:

- ✓ Ninety percent of farms are operated by an individual or family. The number of corporate farms declined by 18.4 percent from 1997 to 2002
- ✓ The average age of principal farm or ranch operators was 55.3-years-old compared to 54-years-old in 1997. Results showed an average age of second operators at 49.4-years-old and third operators at 41.9-years-old.

To view or download 2002 Ag Census, visit <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>, and click on the "Census of Agriculture" link.

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